IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with <u>underlining</u> and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims in accordance with the following:

1-13. (CANCELLED)

14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A <u>computer</u> server connected with a plurality of multifunction machines via a network, the <u>computer</u> server comprising:

a plurality of functions that perform processing to a document;

<u>an operation manager receiving a function request from at least one of the multifunction machines and activating a request processor communicating with the multifunction machine based upon the function request; and</u>

a plurality of request ~~processing units that~~ <u>processors each upon the activating by the operation manager</u> communicate with any of the plurality of functions <u>and the multi-function machine</u>, and cause one of the plurality of functions to perform ~~the document~~ <u>a</u> processing <u>to document data received from the multi-function machine</u> according to a<u>the</u> function request <u>from the multifunction machine,</u>

<u>wherein the activated request processor</u> ~~; an assigning unit that~~ ~~assigns one of the request processing units to a multifunction machine based on a connection request for the function request from the multifunction machine, and~~ sends a completion-of-assignment notification <u>assigning the request processor</u> to the multifunction machine <u>and</u> indicating that processing of the function request is <u>possible, and</u>~~possible; an assignment canceling unit that~~ cancels the assignment of the ~~one~~ <u>request</u> ~~processing unit~~<u>processor</u> to the multifunction machine, when a command ~~of the requested function~~<u>pertaining to the function request</u> is not received from the assigned multifunction machine within a predetermined amount of time~~; and~~

~~an information recorder that has multifunction connection information indicative of whether the multifunction machine is acceptable to be in an operable state in linkage with the server, wherein the connection request from the multifunction machine is assigned to the one~~

~~request processing unit in the assigning based on the multifunction connection information.~~

15. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The server according to claim 14, wherein the completion-of-assignment notification has information of the function, and the function is processable by the server.

16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The server according to claim 14,

wherein the function is a fax that faxes image data, and

wherein the request ~~processing unit~~processor controls the fax and sends the image data received from the multifunction machine, when the request ~~processing unit~~processor receives from the multifunction machine a fax command as the function command to fax the image data.

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The server according to claim 14,

wherein the function is a recorder that records image data, and

wherein the request ~~processing unit~~processor records the image data received from the multifunction machine on the recorder, when the request ~~processing unit~~processor receives from the multifunction machine a record command as the function command to record the image data.

18. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The server according claim 14, further comprising:

a utilizing situation recorder that records utilizing situation information received from the plurality of multifunction machines, the utilizing situation information being information how often each of the multifunction machines is used; and

a utilizing situation information transmitter that transmits, when any one of nodes on the network makes a request for transmitting the utilizing situation information, the utilizing situation information back to said node having transmitted a transmission request.

19. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The server according to claim 18, wherein the utilizing situation information transmitter transmits the utilizing situation information to the network nodes in accordance with a predetermined schedule.

20. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The server according to claim 18, the server further comprising:

a destruction detecting unit that detects a destruction of the information recorded on the utilizing situation recorder;

a utilizing situation information managing unit that requests each of the multifunction machines to transmit the utilizing situation information when the destruction detecting unit detects the destruction, and again records the transmitted utilizing situation information on the utilizing situation recorder.

21.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A storage medium readable by a computer, the storage medium storing a program of instructions executable by the computer to perform a function as a server, the function comprising:

providing a plurality of functions that perform processing to a document;

receiving a function request from at least one of the multifunction machines;

activating a request processor communicating with the multifunction machine based upon the function request; and

providing a plurality of request processing units that processors each upon the activating

communicate with any of the plurality of functions and the multifunction machine, and

cause one of the plurality of functions to perform the document a processing to document data received from the multifunction machine according to a the function request from the multifunction machine, ; assigning one of the request processing units to a multifunction machine based on a connection request for the function request from the multifunction machine, and sending

send a completion-of-assignment notification assigning the request processor to the multifunction machine and indicating that processing of the function request is possible; possible, and

cancelingcancel the assignment of the one request processing unitprocessor to the multifunction machine, when a command of the requested function pertaining to the function request is not received from the assigned multifunction machine within a predetermined amount of time, and

storing multifunction connection information indicating whether the multifunction machine is acceptable to be in an operable state in linkage with the server, wherein the connection request from the multifunction machine is assigned to the one request processing unit based on the multifunction connection information.

4

22.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of executing multiple functions using multifunction apparatuses connected to each other via a network, comprising:

providing a plurality of functions in a multifunction apparatus that perform processing to a document;

receiving by the multifunction apparatus a function request from at least one other multifunction apparatus;

activating in the multifunction apparatus a request processor communicating with the other multifunction apparatus based upon the function request; and

providing in the multifunction apparatus a plurality of request processing units that processors each upon the activating

communicate with any of the functions and the other multifunction apparatus, and

cause one of the plurality of functions to perform the documenta processing to document data received from the other multifunction apparatus according to athe function request from the other multifunction apparatus, ; assigning one of the request processing units to the other multifunction apparatus based on a connection request for the function request from the multifunction apparatus, and transmitting an assignment

send a completion-of-assignment notification assigning the request processor to the other multifunction apparatus and indicating that processing of the function request is possible;possible, and

cancelingcancel the assignment of the request processing unitprocessor to the other multifunction apparatus, when a command of the requested functionpertaining to the function request is not received from the assigned other multifunction apparatus within a predetermined amount of time.

23.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The server according to claim 14, wherein the server has information of each of the multifunction machines, and the information has at least one of a status of the multifunction machine, a type of executable job, an address on the network, user information and a type of connection.

24.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A server connected with a plurality of multifunction machines via a network, the server comprising:

a plurality of functions that perform processing to a document;

an operation manager receiving a function request from at least one of the multifunction

machines and activating a request processor communicating with the multifunction machine based upon the function request; and

a plurality of request ~~processing units that~~ processors each upon the activating by the operation manager communicate with any of the plurality of functions and the multifunction machine, and cause one of the plurality of functions to perform ~~the documen~~ta processing to document data received from the multifunction machine according to the function request from the multifunction machine,

wherein the activated request processor ~~;an assigning unit that assigns at least one of the request processing units to a multifunction machine based on a connection request for the function request from the multifunction machine, and~~ sends a completion-of-assignment notification assigning the request processor to the multifunction machine and indicating that processing of the function request is ~~possible; and an assignment canceling unit that~~possible and cancels the assignment of the ~~one~~ request ~~processing unit~~processor to the multifunction machine, when a command ~~of the requested function~~ pertaining to the function request is not received from the assigned multifunction machine within a predetermined amount of time,

wherein the server has at least one of option information, multifunction machine connection information, non-self system linkage information, and intra self-system registration address information, the option information is information of any of the plurality of functions executable by the server, the multifunction machine and the non-self system linkage information is used when the server accesses another system on the network, and the intra self-system registration address information is used when the server accesses intra self-system.

25.   (CANCELLED)